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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

Argentina

A1118

April 24, 1980

TO: HA - Ms. Patricia M. Derian

FROM: HA - Mary F. Hanley *MFH*

SUBJECT: Memcon on Human Rights and Argentina with
Argentine Press Attache Herman Massini

At the invitation of Mr. Massini, I joined him for lunch today. He expressed concern about the interview he had reluctantly granted Arnold Abrams of Newsday the day before. He was left with the feeling that Mr. Abrams wanted to cause or point out troubles between his embassy and Pat Derian and carefully reminded me of the good working relations between the Ambassador and Pat Derian, Pat Flood, and previously Mark Schneider. He clearly fears the worst outcome for the Newsday piece and said, "we have enough problems with the two human rights reports."

We did not discuss the GOA report in any detail because neither one of us had read enough of it. It led us to the discussion in general, however, and he readily agreed that the problem of accounting to the families of disappeareds is a very serious one. He offered up some familiar but weak language on those who have gone underground and turned up later in other countries. I agreed that numbers were debatable, but reminded him that that wasn't really the issue, rather it was that there were any at all and the GOA couldn't or wouldn't account for them.

We agreed that there were improved changes but I left no question that the USG remained deeply concerned about the disappearances. I expressed my disbelief that the GOA doesn't really want to resolve this problem and that it doesn't have the power to do so. I reminded him that when the GOA said over a year ago, that disappearances would stop, they practically came to an end.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

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Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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BOX 8114 (2/21)

I asked his opinion of the Church's new role as mediator. He views it as positive and important and said that the wide gap between the "progressives" and "conservatives" within the Church has nearly disappeared. He attributes this to the unthinkable killings of priests which shocked conservatives into participation.

He placed great significance on a recent statement by the "most important politician in Argentina," Ricardo Balbin (as reported by Juan Onis in today's New York Times) who said on TV in Spain that, "there are no missing persons in Argentina, they are all dead." He said this will cause great distress among the friends and families who still hope.

He shook his head alot and said, "it is a terrible problem."

He also said that a nearly 200 page statement by the GOA re the OAS report had been delivered by the Ambassador to Bowdler yesterday. He also said that he feels they have been fortunate that other news has overtaken and diffused the OAS report. I said that when the Cubans were settled somewhere, the 400 pages would still be there along with the recommendations to be acted on.

I told him - and he seemed quite surprised - that Manfred Schoenfeld of La Prensa was coming here May 5-9 and that he would be visiting our office. He thinks that is a very good thing and expressed high regard for Schoenfeld and referring to La Prensa said, "they have guts." He did not think it would be worth your while to see the editors from Para Ti, who are coming about the same time. Oliva from New York keeps requesting this appointment but Massini says his publications, but for one weekly news magazine, are something like People Magazine. He told me of a recent article by another publishing company on Kennedy that was a terrible embarrassment to them because it completely misrepresented and distorted Kennedy and he said, "even if we have differences of opinion, we have no interest in stories like that."

We discussed the tremendous refugee problem in the U.S. He of course thinks we can't possibly continue to take all the thousands that want to come. He also readily conceded that it was somewhat shameful that Latin countries had not offered refuge to the Cubans. In all, the discussion was a perfect lead-in to my conclusion that we (in our discussion), had certainly made a strong case for improving conditions in countries so that their citizens would not want or have to leave.

cc: Stephen Palmer
Stephen Cohen
Charles Salmon
Roberta Cohen
Richard Graham
Patrick Flood ✓